

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-13 /090 W

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R 111110Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9635

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 17096

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG LY

SUBJ: EGYPT AND LIBYA

1. QADHAFI VISIT TO MOSCOW WAS BARELY REPORTED IN EGYPTIAN PRESS AND RECEIVED NO EDITORIAL ATTENTION. EGYPT IS IGNORING QADHAFI. QADHAFI, ON THE OTHER HAND, SEEMS FROM CAIRO VANTAGE, TO BE SHOWING EVIDENCE OF DISCOMFORT AT HIS EXCLUSION FROM THE COUNCILS OF THOSE ARAB STATES THAT MATTER IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE, I.E., EGYPT, SYRIA AND SAUDI ARABIA. WE ASSUME A VISIT TO MOSCOW WAS AT LEAST IN PART MOTIVATED BY DESIRE TO GET BACK INTO THE ACTION. EGYPT, HOWEVER, HAS TAKEN NO NOTICE OF THIS VISIT AND IS PROCEEDING ON ASSUMPTION THAT QADHAFI, GIVEN HIS LIMITED ARAB ASSETS (AFTER ALL, ONLY ARAFAT IS EVEN TALKING TO HIM), CAN, FOR NOW, SAFELY BE IGNORED.

2. EGYPTIANS THINK THAT THEIR SABER-RATTLING IN THE WESTERN DESERT SCARED QADHAFI INTO HIS SEPTEMBER 1 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE WOULD NEITHER BREAK RELATIONS WITH EGYPT NOR PROMOTE FURTHER SUBVERSION. EGYPTIAN
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PROPAGANDA ATTACKS VIRTUALLY CEASED AFTER THE SEPTEMBER

1 SPEECH, THOUGH EGYPTIAN BRIGADE REMAINS IN PLACE ON BORDER.

3. NEVERTHELESS, PRESENT PUBLIC CALM BETWEEN THE TWO CAPITALS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS EVIDENCE SADAT HAS REASSESSED HIS VIEW THAT QADHAFI IS "THE LUNATIC LIBYAN." LARGE OFFICE IN ALEX IS STILL CLOSED. FAHMY TOLD AMB FEW DAYS AGO THAT GOE RECENTLY SEIZED LIBYAN SHIP WHICH HAD APPARENTLY STRAYED INTO EGYPTIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS IN GULF OF SOLLUM. ARAFAT'S RECENT MEDIATION EFFORTS WERE HANDLED IN CAIRO BY THE PRIMIN AND SPEAKER MAR'I; SADAT DID NOT DISCUSS LIBYA WITH ARAFAT. QADHAFI'S BETE NOIRE, OMAR MUHAYSHI, WHILE MUZZLED, IS STILL IN EGYPT. PERHAPS CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE THAT EGYPT IS NOT PREPARED HOLD OUT HAND OF FRIENDSHIP EXISTS IN FACT THAT AL-HUNI (WHO INSISTS ON RAPPROACHMENT AS CONDITION OF HIS RETURN) IS ALSO STILL IN EGYPT.

4. WE THINK THAT SADAT'S ATTENTION IS NOW FIRMLY FIXED ON HIS PEACE INITIATIVE AND ON FORGING THE KIND OF SYRIAN-SAUDI-PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY THAT WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE. IN THIS HIGH-STAKES GAME, QADHAFI CAN HAVE NO PLACE UNLESS HE SUCCESSFULLY DISRUPTS ARAB EFFORTS BY, FOR EXAMPLE, ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE NEW REJECTION FRONT. IF LIBYANS WENT ALL OUT TO DESTROY SADAT'S PEACE PLAN OR IF LARG MOUNTED NEW INTERNAL SUBVERSION IN EGYPT, SADAT'S ANGER WOULD BE HARD TO CONTROL. AS LONG AS TRIPOLI DOES NOT INERFERE IN EGYPTIAN INTERNAL AND FOREIGN POLICIES, HOWEVER, WE THINK THE "QADHAFI MENACE" WILL NOT FOR THE TIME BEING RECEIVE SIGNIFICANT ATTENTION IN CAIRO. THAT LIBYA HAS NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN, HOWEVER, IS EVIDEND IN COMMENT MADE BY FONMIN FAHMY TO TWO RECENT CODELS AND STAFFDELS TO THE EFFECT THAT ULTIMATELY POPULATION PRESSURES IN EGYPT WILL FORCE GOE TAKEOVER SPARESELY POPULATED LIBYA.
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